‘YOU’RE THE G8, WE’RE THE SIX BILLION’: THE GENOA DEMONSTRATIONS

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The 2001 G8 summit was held in Genoa between 19 and 22 July. A year earlier, at the Port Alegre international meeting of the movement for globalisation ‘from below’ (usually known as ‘no global’), it had been decided to mobilise on an international scale against the neo-liberal version of globalisation. About 800 organisations came together in the Genoa Social Forum (GSF) which, together with other groups, organised the protest.¹

Given that many international summits over the previous two years had been met with sometimes violent protests, the government’s preparations for the G8 concentrated on keeping demonstrators away from summit meetings, and those with ideas of violence well away from the city itself. In addition to installing high barriers to protect the so-called ‘red zone’ around the summit meetings, the airport, railway stations and motorway exits were closed, and both confirmed and suspected activists were taken back to the city limits. In its testimony to the Parliamentary Commission, Chief of Police De Gennaro spoke of 140,000 checks made and more than 2,000 people turned back. Expulsion orders were used to keep certain militants from entering Genoa. With the city centre closed, the port and airport sealed off, and the railway

stations and motorway exits tightly controlled, Genoa emptied: two days before the start of the summit, electrical consumption and waste disposal had dropped by 40 per cent.

Despite the imposing show of force and tension caused by some attacks before the start of the summit, as well as somewhat alarmist information from the Secret Service – the former head of UCIGOS, La Barbera, spoke of ‘a flood of information mostly failing to provide any result’² – the peaceful immigrant march on 19 July included 50,000 people. However, this situation changed radically the following day due to what the newspapers all described as the provocations of the radical Black Bloc, followed by indiscriminate police actions in response. According to press estimations, between 400 and 1,000 Black Bloc members were involved, while the police spoke of 500 Italians and 2,000 foreigners. Ignoring the red zone, they attacked banks, shops, the prison and public buildings in the morning of 20 July unchallenged. For the entire day, events followed a similar pattern: after the Black Bloc’s attacks, the police force responded by setting upon those in or near peaceful protests, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, photographers and journalists. This happened at Piazza Da Novi, where COBAS and social groups were concentrated, and at Piazza Manin, where police attacked peaceful Lilliput demonstrators (who were engaged in ‘non-violent intervention’ to hinder the Black Bloc) with water cannon, tear-gas and truncheons. Above all, the fight with the so-called ‘civil disobedience protesters’, encircled and repeatedly charged, started in this fashion.

After the police charge, some groups of demonstrators reacted by throwing stones, provoking the police to use armoured cars. During one incursion, a *carabinieri* jeep became stuck and its occupants were attacked by demonstrators. One of the *carabinieri* inside opened fire, killing a 23-year-old Genovese activist, Carlo Giuliani. Within the red zone, the police and forestry police used water cannon laced with chemicals against demonstrators from ATTAC, FIOM, ARCI and the left-wing CGIL, who were banging on the fences and throwing cloves of garlic. The Democrats of the Left (DS) Mayor Pericù, who had tried to negotiate with the organisers, complained about the absence of negotiators from police headquarters. At five o’clock in the evening of 20 July, after the GSF spokesman, Agnoletto, had declared the demonstration over, a policeman threw a smoke bomb, which was thrown back – and the charges began again. In the evening, the movement’s spokespersons were careful to distance themselves from the Black Bloc, but

also criticised the police actions. According to the government, the responsibility for the disorder was the GSF's. The DS withdrew its support for the following day's demonstration, instructing its members not to go to Genoa.

At the 21 July demonstration – whose organisers claimed that 100,000 people were expected, against the police chief's claim of no more than 40,000 – between 200,000 and 300,000 demonstrators gathered. Again, there were attacks by the Black Bloc, which the demonstrators tried to prevent. The police this time used tear-gas fired from helicopters and armoured cars to keep themselves more at a distance from the demonstrators. The first charge at 2.25 p.m. took place whilst the procession was about to set off; similar charges took place at 2.50 p.m. and 5.35 p.m. The daily papers – and not just those supporting the movement – reported numerous attempts by the movement, which had formed its own rudimentary security force, to push back violent protesters and to rescue demonstrators and lawyers being beaten up by the police. The day's totals came to 228 injured, including 73 police officers, and 60 arrests, as well as damage to the value of 50 billion lire.

On the evening of 21 July, the police burst into the Diaz School, where the GSF, its legal advice team, the Indymedia press group and a dormitory for protestors were based, searching for weapons. The press described the behaviour of the police as particularly brutal – a description with which certain members of Parliament who were present concurred. According to the report by Interior Ministry Inspector Pippo Micalizio: 'Of the 93 persons detained and arrested in the building, 62 (around 66 per cent) were referred with varying medical prognoses: 24 per cent up to five days recovery; 36 per cent between six and 10 days; 11 per cent between 11 and 20 days; 18 per cent from 21 to 40 days; 6 per cent were given the all-clear. However, prognoses were uncertain for the remaining 5 per cent.' Of those (93) arrested, 15 were Italians and 78 were foreigners. The list of confiscated items included two Molotov cocktails, nine balaclavas, six shin-guards, four elbow-pads, 15 cameras, three mobile telephones, 17 swimming-masks and goggles, a thermos and various picks, sticks, leaflets, banners and Swiss Army knives. The charge was for conspiracy to commit acts of plunder; but 92 of the 93 detainees were immediately released by magistrates. The police confiscated the hard disk from the lawyers' computer, whilst the Indymedia computers were destroyed.

In the days that followed, various testimonies were published recounting civilians' mistreatment in the Bolzaneto barracks, where

a centre for identifying detainees, operated by a group of penitentiary officers from the GOM (Mobile Operations Unit), had been set up. Many witness statements, a large number of them from foreigners, described physical and psychological assaults. Using tear-gas and truncheons, and forcing detainees to stay on their feet for hours, police compelled those being held to repeat fascist and racist slogans. These reports were cause for great concern amongst members of peace organisations as well as journalists. Inspector Montanaro, sent to Genoa as part of an enquiry set up by the Interior Ministry, discovered evidence of organisational failings and a lack of checks. The GSF's lawyers complained that as a general measure, since then revoked, the Genoa prosecutor forbade meetings between detainees and their defence counsel under the pretext of a danger of contaminating evidence, as well as logistical problems.

After the end of the summit, whilst Interior Minister Scajola praised the police for having defended the red zone and the 5,000 journalists and 9,000 members of international delegations therein, the parliamentary opposition hesitantly requested the resignation of the Interior Minister and the opening of an enquiry. After an initial refusal by the government, pressure from the head of state pushed Parliament to launch an investigative commission (with more limited powers than a full enquiry) into 'the events of Genoa on 19, 20, 21 and 22 July during the G8 summit'. The commission's work finished at the end of September with the tabling of the reports: one for the governing majority, one from the Olive Tree Coalition (the *Ulivo*) and one from Communist Refoundation (RC). The Genoa magistrature opened seven investigations. The *carabiniere*, a 20-year-old auxiliary, who had shot Carlo Giuliani dead was charged with murder, and officers involved in the Diaz School raid were also investigated. Legal proceedings were started relating to the mistreatment at the Bolzaneto barracks and the lack of action against the Black Bloc, as well as violence perpetrated by the demonstrators. Following the ministerial investigation, Deputy Chief of Police Ansoino Andreassi, Arnaldo La Barbera, the head of UCIGOS, and Francesco Colucci, the chief constable of Genoa, were removed from their posts, together with Deputy Chief Constable Perugini, a former secretary of SAP, and the deputy head of the Genovese branch of DIGOS, who was photographed kicking a youth lying on the ground. Minister Marconi fired Agnoletto, the GSF spokesman, as his AIDS adviser.

The police handling of the demonstrations raised protests in Italy and abroad. On 24 July, various Italian cities played host to

100,000 demonstrators protesting peacefully against the Genovese repression. Amongst their slogans were 'Tute nere, divise blu, provocazione non ne vogliamo più' (Black suits, blue uniforms – we don't want any more provocation) and 'Morire a vent'anni è una follia, disarmiamo la polizia' (Dying aged 20 is madness – disarm the police). Salvi, the Deputy Secretary of the National Association of Magistrates, denounced the pressure placed on judges from those who wanted greater police powers and rapid justice. The National Press Federation participated in demonstrations 'to express their protest at the actions of the police with regard to the Social Forum press centre'. In Italy, 530 university professors asked for a commitment by President Ciampi to look into the causes and dynamics of the Genoa repression. Protests were also made by the President of the Association of Journalists over the police having forged yellow press identity badges, and by the lawyers' association for the obstruction of the right to a defence. The reaction in international public opinion – and also by many foreign governments – was heavily critical. Starting 21 July, there were many demonstrations, often in front of Italian embassies and consulates, in numerous European countries and beyond. Whilst even moderate journalists denounced the violence of the Italian police, puzzlement and requests for clarification came from the consular officials of many friendly nations, not least the US.

The Movement for Globalisation 'from Below'

The Genoa demonstrations represented a break (albeit somewhat anticipated) with the image of social movements in the 1980s and 1990s, which had portrayed them as integrated and 'civilised', more at ease at the bargaining table than in piazzas. Although there had been periods of conflict in Italy, from the social centres to the milk COBAS, these had been isolated and sporadic. Furthermore, protests against neo-liberal globalisation had initially assumed a moderate form, relying on lobbying and advocacy.³

After decades of predominantly peaceful activities, emphasis has now been put upon the dangers of the radicalisation of political and social conflict. In the recent history of the 'no global' movement, clashes between police and demonstrators have been frequent. Before Genoa, in reverse order the year saw violence in Göteborg in June at the EU/US summit; in Quebec City in April at the NAFTA conference; in Naples in March at the Global Forum;

and at Cancun and Davos in February at meetings of the World Economic Forum. In 2000, there had been clashes in September in Prague at the meeting of the international committee of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; in April at the summit of these two organisations in Washington; at Davos in January, and again at the World Economic Forum. The year before demonstrations were held in Seattle in November 1999 at the World Trade Organisation summit, and in Cologne in January at the G7 summit. Many protests had taken place peacefully, in particular the preparatory demonstrations of the counter-summits, but the number of violent clashes between police and protesters had risen to a significant proportion, at least amongst the more visible activities of the 'no global' movement. What, then, were the specific challenges which the movement presented to police forces and governments around the world?

Firstly, from the point of view of diversity of activity, the movement has often mobilised at major international summits: focusing only on the major demonstrations, one took place in 1998; five in 1999; 10 in 2000; and 13 through July 2001. Traditionally, visits by heads of state and international meetings represent especially delicate moments in public order management, which must be combined with protecting the foreign dignitaries. The protection of the right to demonstrate conflicts with the goal of protecting the visiting heads of state. Symbolically, the host country needs to prove itself in the eyes of international public opinion as a country capable of monopolising force on its own territory, a vital component of sovereignty at the international level.

In recent events involving the 'globalisation movement from below', after the initial successes of demonstrators in breaking down barriers, security around heads of state became increasingly tight: the red zones, out of bounds to demonstrators, grew wider and more heavily guarded to the extent of erecting high fences and sealing them. For many demonstrators, even if the violation of red zones has become a symbol of the illegitimacy of some international summits, their suspension sometimes being forced by the incursion of demonstrators, the fortifications in which heads of state meet are themselves a symbolic victory, indicating as they do the inability of state leaders to meet without taking extraordinary measures. At the same time, the security at summits produces two dangerous tendencies: restricting the possibilities of peaceful protest, and simultaneously distancing those who govern from the population at large. The perceived risk of invasion reduces the

space for dialogue and negotiation between demonstrators and institutions. The heightening of barriers also has repercussions for media coverage, with journalists forced to choose between covering events from the 'inside' or the 'outside'.

From Seattle to Genoa, the conflict over the red zone has become ritualised, with an escalation of police strategies to defend the summit area, together with a multiplication of experimental tactics by demonstrators plotting penetration: some throw coloured balloons; non-violent protesters lie in the way; a little more physical protest comes from those who push against the gates. In some cases (but not in Genoa) anarchist groups try to penetrate by throwing stones. As occurred with workers' picket lines, student occupations, peace demonstrations next to Cruise and Pershing 2 missile sites, and the anti-nuclear movement with sit-ins at nuclear power stations or nuclear waste transport sites, for the 'no global' movement summits have become the prime arena of interaction with the forces of law and order.

In comparison with other movements, the 'no global' movement has a heightened awareness of the risks associated with the use of violence, leading a large proportion of its members to practice non-violence, even as a defensive measure, and the rest to consider violence as tactically dangerous. According to research carried out by the Political Science Department of the University of Florence, 90 per cent of the 800 demonstrators interviewed in Genoa had never employed violent tactics; 40 per cent condemned any form of violence; and 53 per cent justified only those forms which were used to defend themselves against police assaults.⁴ However, although the movement presents itself as essentially peaceful, at least in comparison with former movements, there have been a range of actions taken by various groups, such diversity being accepted as part of a tolerance for different approaches, but perhaps also in the light of the possible tactical advantages of complementing symbolic provocation (a 'game') with non-violence (civil disobedience).

The lowest common denominator, which was formalised in Genoa amongst groups belonging to the GSF by signing a protocol, is the non-use of offensive weapons: sticks, ball-bearings and other potentially offensive weapons are banned. However, certain groups of demonstrators are open to tactics designed to penetrate the barriers peacefully, although not excluding physical contact with the police. Before Genoa, this had never taken place in Italy; demonstrators abroad had taken part in the traditional pushing

and shoving of picket lines and the like. Civil disobedience strategies may carry the risk of misinterpretation – pushing and shoving can be interpreted as an attack, just as a sit-in can be seen as a ‘proactive obstacle’ – but in Genoa, the strategy was by all accounts limited to a ritualised, symbolic confrontation with the police at the entrance to the red zone. As one Italian ‘disobedient’ testified, declaring that the police had been told in advance of the time and manner of the demonstration: ‘For us it was enough to stand in front of the armoured cars with nets, to show some resistance to attract media coverage of a new group engaging in civil disobedience.’⁵ To protect themselves during this physical contact, or in case the police reacted with force during the demonstration, the Italian ‘disobedience’ demonstrators relied upon protective gear such as foam rubber suits, shin-guards, and often diving goggles (to protect against tear-gas) and helmets. Numerous social movements have adopted the civil disobedience strategy in recent years, having previously supported open confrontation with the police, but now choosing to turn this physical approach into a normally peaceable action. Neither this ‘White Bloc’ nor other components of the movement (including the COBAS and other social networks) have, however, renounced physical tactics in the case of police attacks, despite considering violence *per se* as dangerous. In other words, this position on reacting to forceful intervention by the police is common to most movements, past and present (including the workers’ movement), and facilitates an escalation in violence in cases where police action is seen as aggressive.

On the margins of the demonstrations, groups such as the Black Bloc engage in a form of ‘urban guerrilla warfare’, using offensive weapons to attack either specific targets or the police. Made up of small autonomous groups mainly from networks of youths socialised in radical conflict (such as the *Autonomen* in Germany, young Basques in Spain and several social networks in Italy), the Black Bloc claims to be engaged in a brand of existentialist violence. While all members acknowledge forms of violence as a means to an end, they are divided over what actions can be regarded as ‘acceptable’. From Seattle onwards, these small groups have appeared on the one hand more organised, but on the other hand more isolated from the main protest movement, which in Genoa cordoned them off from the principal demonstrations, declaring them to be not just pernicious but also ‘alien to us’. This certainly contributed to the perception by the movement of the damage that violent action had caused to their own image.

Although marginal, the Black Bloc represents a serious problem to the peaceful management of demonstrations – a problem accentuated by the organisational structure of the movement. One characteristic constantly associated with social movements has been their status as a 'network of networks', many-headed, composite and impossible to distil into a single organisational and strategic unit.⁶ In the 'no global' movement, the organisational fluidity is opposed to delegation and bureaucracy. Instead, it experiments with new forms of organisation which allow participation through virtual networks of member groups. Such an approach accepts, and indeed positively promotes, the absence of leadership in order to allow bottom-up self-management, and renounces unity as a source of contamination. It should be added that both its refusal to adopt violence and its organisational fluidity prevent the 'no global' movement from building its own security service (seen as a symbol of militarisation) to repulse the small but aggressive Black Bloc groups.⁷ In comparison, the Black Bloc, with its total lack of co-ordination, is all the more hostile to the movement, accusing it of giving in to institutionalisation and deradicalisation of its protest, and is increasingly indifferent to any level of agreement on non-belligerence. Indeed, whilst prior to Genoa there should have been such pacts, the Black Bloc, having been excluded by the organisers who had taken a clear stance of non-violence, tried to attack the demonstrators and to invade the GSF base on a number of occasions.

Traditionally, organisational fluidity and the inability to manage demonstrations themselves have been seen by those responsible for public order as fraught with risk, potentially multiplying the number of groups needed to negotiate with, and reducing the possibility of them exercising control over their mass base.⁸ This is all the more true when the demonstrators are literally talking different languages, come from different countries and are often very experienced in radicalised political conflict. Linked to this multiplicity – or, to use the language of the 'disobedients', in the presence of the multitudes – a further novelty of the movement is treated with apprehension by those managing public order. The movement combines the denunciation of neo-liberal globalisation with support for globalisation 'from below', or a 'globalisation of rights' – two extremely different issues. It encompasses nuns and union members, bankers and farmers, association volunteers and social centre militants, feminists and ecologists, Native Americans and the 'Apennine Elves'.⁹

The challenge from the 'no global' movement, which proclaims that 'another world is possible', is not so much in the radicalness of its demands. In the Port Alegre charter, a number of fairly moderate requests concerning greater social justice and environmentally sustainable development were listed – for instance, that 'governments respect their obligations and use international means to defend human rights and support multilateral environmental agreements'; 'total recognition of union rights'; 'democratic agrarian reform'; 'a fair system of trade'; freedom of movement for individuals; 'sustainable agricultural policies, identifying neo-liberalism as responsible for growing social inequality and the destruction of the environment'. It is an optimistic movement ('We are people who dream') with pragmatic objectives – cancellation of Third World debt, support for the Kyoto Protocol and Tobin Tax, and reform of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – and a strong political will. In contrast to the past, these demands are combined into a common supranational platform. The 'no global' label is as such incorrect, since the movement is organising globally to influence the globalisation process in a way which recognises the rights of peoples around the world and promotes political intervention in the marketplace.

Research into the Genoa activists also confirms the political element and the ability to participate in different ways. The interviewees use all possible means of collecting information on politics (96 per cent read newspapers, 88 per cent watch the news, 89 per cent use the Internet), and they try to influence politics using a diverse array of conventional and unconventional tools (52 per cent use electoral propaganda, 86 per cent sign petitions, 67 per cent take part in sit-ins, 65 per cent in boycotts and 69 per cent in the occupation of buildings). Faith in negotiation – 76 per cent of those interviewed support bargaining with national and supranational institutions – is combined with active participation in organisations covering a wide array of themes (34 per cent belong to political parties, 53 per cent to a student collective, 37 per cent to an environmental group, 43 per cent to a social volunteer group, 20 per cent to a union, 18 per cent to a religious group).

The movement also presents a particular challenge in its very novelty, making it sometimes difficult to categorise using existing labels. It has been noted in the past that the process of incorporating new challengers into the existing political system is a slow one, occurring through the construction of institutions and the recognition of an emerging identity. In terms directly related to

public order, peaceful interaction is facilitated by mutual understanding; stability in relations, if not necessarily in trust itself; and, at the very least, mutual recognition. The 'no global' movement is a novelty on a number of counts, however. It is the first movement in more than 20 years to protest against the system *in toto*, and in a different manner from the protests of 1968. It is largely made up of (very) young people from a generation who until recently were described in the press (including the left-wing press) and opinion polls as selfish, hedonistic and indifferent to politics. In Genoa, according to the aforementioned research, 80 per cent of the protesters were under 30, 20 per cent were under 20, and 50 per cent were students. It is also a movement in which a very large number of its members were first introduced to politics – for 54 per cent of participants, the Genoa demonstrations were their first experience of protest against globalisation. It is also a melting pot *par excellence* for the 'other' category – those who have been classed as non-citizens. The Thursday before the tragic events of Genoa, the immigrant march was held, and for the Friday and Saturday marches many demonstrators had come from other countries, mainly European but also from beyond. The high proportion of foreigners amongst those arrested, and the large number arrested on very weak grounds – for instance, for wearing black clothing – may be seen as confirmation that those responsible for public order are unable to recognise the 'new'. These difficulties in recognition can then knowingly be used to increase confusion – for instance, the reports, probably leaked by the Secret Service, of the arrival in Genoa of Bin Laden terrorists, together with claims that the demonstrators were preparing to throw infected blood. More concretely, the Chief Constable of Genoa, Colucci, admitted to the Joint Parliamentary Commission that the fear of demonstrators taking police as hostages influenced the control strategy employed at the G8 summit.

The Movement and the Police

The potential threat to security at international summits; the presence on the margins of small groups who attack the police using guerrilla tactics; the inability (or refusal) of demonstrators to provide their own security service; the multiplicity of focal points; the novelty of the movement and its supranationality – all are certainly characteristics of the 'no global' movement which

have made the job of ensuring public order more complex. Not by chance, the handling of demonstrations during summits had already changed before Genoa from the strategies adopted at the beginning of the 1970s, which aimed at the non-conflictual management of public order and which, in the 1980s and 1990s, had been partly adopted in Italy, too.¹⁰ These strategies, aimed at de-escalation (or, in the Italian case, at prevention), were based upon certain dynamics and presuppositions. Before demonstrations, representatives from the demonstrators and from the police force would meet and negotiate clear routes and acceptable behaviour for the entirety of the demonstration (including the various symbolic violations tacitly agreed upon by both parties). Police charges would never be aimed at peaceful groups; the agreements made by the demonstrators would not be broken; lines of communication between the police and the demonstrators would be kept open during the entire demonstration; above all, the police would guarantee the right to demonstrate peacefully, and violent groups would be stopped without putting the safety of the peaceful protesters in jeopardy. De-escalation strategies were not designed for peaceful marches, but rather were intended to contain violent minorities, while, at the same time, guaranteeing the rights and safety of the peaceful majority.¹¹

The Seattle police, who resorted to charging peaceful processions, had already been accused of lack of preparation towards managing de-escalation. For the Davos, Prague and Nice summits, the freedom to demonstrate was made subordinate to the security of heads of state – hundreds of demonstrators were stopped at the border, and heavy restrictions on freedom of movement were made around the meeting areas. The escalation continued, for instance, in Naples on 17 March, when the left-wing government was still in power and, according to journalists' accounts, when the police intervened brutally and oppressively. The Göteborg conference was defined by the German weekly *Die Zeit* (10 July 2001) as a key event both for the authorities and for the demonstrators, inasmuch as a military escalation occurred which threatened to feed into further disruption in Genoa. The impression that European police forces, faced with the 'no global' protest movement and the Black Bloc's violence, were moving away from de-escalation strategies was confirmed by the situation in Germany where post-Göteborg discussions were dominated by the problems of blocking and isolating violent protesters. The suggested means was the *Ausreiseverbot*, whereby the protestors, who are seen simply as criminal

hooligans, are prevented from leaving their country during international summits. Furthermore, preventive measures taken by Italian and other European police forces are characterised by a growing tendency towards repressive action, as well as restrictions on freedom of movement and of demonstration.¹²

If the move away from the de-escalation strategy had begun before Genoa, the choices of protest control used in Genoa were clearly contrary to prevention (as even the police union SILP – part of CGIL – observed). The clashes started when, after the violent participation of the Black Bloc, which the movement had declared not to be associated with their march, the police charged the ideologically non-violent elements in the crowd, who thus far had stayed faithful to their undertaking not to use any form of violent protest. According to the leaders of the movement, who had been broaching some informal agreements, the marchers were charged whilst they were still far from the red zone where the G8 summit was being held. Encircling demonstrators with jeeps and firing tear-gas grenades at body height, the police attacked while obstructing escape routes of those who wanted to get away from the area. Firearms were used, such as the one which killed Carlo Giuliani. Many police units (state police, *carabinieri*, *guardia di finanza*, penitentiary officers, forestry police) were present in areas where clashes took place and in detention centres with, according to the ministerial inspectors, little co-ordination and uncertain lines of command. With the more experienced officers concentrated in the red zone, many young officers, some of them conscripts, were trapped in the trouble spots. Also denounced were officers who had infiltrated the Black Bloc not just for intelligence purposes but also to participate in the ensuing fracas.

The final reports presented at the end of the commission's investigation into Genoa all emphasised the failings in co-ordination and intelligence gathering, as well as the brutality used against prisoners. The minority report by the Olive Tree Coalition also underlined the problems associated with concentrating the experienced officers in the red zone, as well as the decision to take a hard line that failed to discriminate between the peaceful majority and a violent minority. The report concluded: 'The facts presented above and the connections between them clearly indicate that in confronting the most violent elements, namely the anarcho-insurrectional fringe of the Black Bloc, adequate measures for containment and suppression were not implemented.'¹³ According to this report, the civil disobedience march was charged by the police

on the Friday when the demonstrators had not yet engaged in any aggressive act. More critical of the police forces, the RC report stated that 'certain elements relating to the management of the piazza and, in particular, the event in which Carlo Giuliani died justify the description of the forces of law and order as completely inadequate ... None of this can be seen as an effect of organisational failings, but rather as one of the consequences of the reform of the *carabinieri*, approved by Parliament in 2000, which consolidated the tendency towards an autonomous organisation even when engaged in public order activities'.¹⁴

Do the events in Genoa, as well as in Seattle, Prague, Göteborg and Naples, indicate that de-escalation techniques are not appropriate to the 'no global' movement? Certainly not. Indeed, the anti-globalisation demonstrations contain precisely the conditions warranting a typical de-escalation strategy, principally, the presence of a peaceful majority of demonstrators whose right to political expression is worthy of defence, even given the violent behaviour of a minority. Research on the Genoa demonstrators indicates, as we have already noted, an overall rejection of violence, either through ideological support for non-violence or as a pragmatic political choice. Furthermore, over half of the participants at the anti-G8 demonstration considered the presence of the police as necessary to guarantee the smooth operation of the demonstration; 35 per cent considered it indispensable in putting down the more violent margins,¹⁵ even if only 6 per cent trust the police. De-escalation tactics, therefore, are likely to be supported by non-violent protesters and are also likely to reinforce the pragmatic political choice of non-violence amongst the intermediary elements. As became obvious in Genoa, the isolation of the most violent elements in the Black Bloc is an aim which the demonstrators share.

Genoa also demonstrates that the absence of de-escalation strategies is a risk not only to demonstrators but also to the police, who come out of the events heavily criticised for their use of force at political demonstrations. As the events of the 1950s and 1960s in Italy show, the police force cannot allow itself to lose the trust not just of the majority but also of a minority of the country. Within the police department itself, it has been observed that the failures of Genoa risk destroying the long process of legitimisation which the police force has undergone since its initial democratic reforms in the 1970s. In failing to control public order in Genoa, the limits of these reforms emerged.

As we have argued elsewhere,¹⁶ the hard line taken by the Italian police was particularly brutal, even if it is part of a more general trend in national police forces away from the de-escalation approach towards controlling the 'no global' movement. This is partly due to certain peculiarities of the Italian case. Despite 20 years of drastic reduction in the number of violent clashes between police and demonstrators, strategies re-emerged at Genoa which, between the end of the Second World War and the 1970s, caused the death of 120 demonstrators in the course of clashes with police. The use of firearms, tear-gas grenades fired at body height and jeep encirclements amount to incomplete demilitarisation, reflecting a lack of co-ordination between the various services, insufficient professionalism, too much emphasis placed on experience largely derived from public order control around stadiums and growing discretionary powers linked to emergency laws on terrorism, the Mafia and football hooligans.

The Movement and Politics before and after Genoa

A historical characteristic of the Italian police force has been its close resemblance to the 'King's police' model, traditionally symptomatic of the European continent, as opposed to the 'citizens' police' model of the Anglo-Saxon world. The Italian police force was, in fact, constructed and legitimated primarily as a political tool, put together and used mostly for public order matters, with close ties to the government. This tradition, criticised by the police reform movement, seems to have persisted nonetheless, both in the military organisation of the force and in police 'wisdom', which is closely linked to the political orientation of the governmental majority. This association is highlighted in particular by the Olive Tree Coalition's report, which criticises the presence of Gianfranco Fini, the Deputy Prime Minister, and four of his party's deputies between 10.00 to 10.30 a.m. and around 4.30 p.m. in the *cara-binieri* operations room in Genoa not just as an attempt to exercise illegal influence, but also as an indication of the attempt by the extreme right of the majority coalition to 'force the hand' of those responsible for public order. It is not by chance that after the events in Genoa, members of the police union requested, above all, political 'cover' and clarity in political direction.

Under these circumstances, public order appears to be extremely sensitive to the political response to the movement, whether at the

national or supranational level. At the supranational level, the 'no global' movement presents particular challenges. As a movement which aims to have a global character and which deals with globalised themes, it interacts on a frequent basis with supranational organisations. These organisations to some extent all suffer from what commentators often refer to as a 'democratic deficit'. The institutions most opposed by the movement are either those which lack precise organisational statutes – such as G7 and G8, which gather together the leaders of the so-called 'strong' nations, and which they accuse of illegitimately deciding the fate of the 180 weaker nations – or those intergovernmental organisations which deal with economic matters, which they accuse of acting in an occult manner, as well as being the principal source of neo-liberal doctrine, which they view as socially and ecologically unsustainable. Even other institutions, such as the UN or the EU, are criticised by the movement – not just for their political decisions but also for their non-democratic structure, which allows little or no access by civil society. For a movement which promotes 'participatory democracy' – so termed in the Port Alegre charter – institutions closed to the outside and lacking in mechanisms of democratic responsibility also lack legitimacy. Even beyond the movement, and sometimes inside intergovernmental institutions themselves, a question is raised about the accountability of institutions composed of either governmental representatives (who are certainly elected, at least when coming from democratic regimes, but rarely as an outcome of policy platforms relevant to positions taken up in these organisations, and are not subject to control by parliaments) or bureaucrats (who are subject to even less control by citizens). The movement's requests for more transparency are obstructed by the very principles which guide intergovernmental institutions. With the partial exception of the EU and the UN, the majority of international organisations remain closed to all pressures from below.

In the case of the anti-G8 demonstrations, political debate on this issue reshaped the approach to dialogue in the days immediately preceding the summit. All, or most, of the representatives of European governments, whether of the centre right or centre left, had proclaimed protest to be useless, given that the governments themselves were already addressing all of the problems, and some comments even questioned the legitimacy of demonstrations by 'self-proclaimed world saviours' against a summit of democratically elected governments. From this, the ideological arguments of

the different political camps seemed to converge against the movement: it is certainly not surprising that Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi saw the spectre of communism behind the protest, but it is amazing that a former member of the extra-parliamentary left during the 1970s such as Germany's Foreign Minister Fischer could accuse the 'no global' movement of being 'a sterile form of anti-capitalism', asking, as US President Bush had done, 'Are we really sure that anti-globalisation protest is in the interests of the Third World?' Thus, undermining the notion of dialogue, the political and moral significance of the movement and of the demonstrations in preparation for the Genoa protest were diminished or eradicated.

The behaviour and attitude of the institutional actors before, during and after Genoa indicate closure to, or at least incomprehension of, the very identity of the movement as a political subject, even before considering any of the themes presented by the various elements in the movement. The movement, which challenges the right of eight 'strong' nations to decide for everyone ('You're the G8, we're six billion' announced the initial banner at the Genoa demonstration), was denied legitimacy as a negotiating opposite number by the government. The real 'responsibility' of the elected leaders was thus contrasted with the illegitimacy, or, as many put it, the lack of electoral responsibility, of the demonstrators and their spokespersons. This challenged the legitimacy not only of the movement but of protest itself and cast 'the piazza' as illicit interference with elected representatives. The final report of the joint commission, approved only by the governing majority's votes, accused the GSF of being two-faced, stating that 'indeed, for the entire duration of the G8 summit, the violent and subversive mind-set of the demonstrators took advantage of the tolerance of the peaceful demonstrators. These latter made no real attempt to indicate, isolate or expel violent subversives' (p. 243). In a turn of rhetoric worthy of Mario Scelba (Minister of the Interior in the 1950s), the opposition was then accused of inciting 'the piazza', being unable to accept their loss of power.

Despite the natural affinity of the left towards the themes of social justice and sustainable development, its recognition of the 'no global' movement as a legitimate political actor appears for the most part uncertain. From the left, the movement (which may be accused of naivety, if not of Luddism) is often criticised for being unable to accept the inevitable progress of which globalisation is a part. In particular, the movement is considered to be a disruptive element which does not acknowledge the necessity of

responsibility of an 'institutional' (or even 'governmental') opposition. The movement's modes of action are considered to be dangerous ('uncivil', 'intrinsically violent') because they do not recognise the procedures of representative democracy. A more sympathetic argument is that the role of the party has become different from that of the movement; the party is a negotiator but one which does not participate in the way that the movement does. In other words, the party can be conceptualised as a politico-institutional actor, largely separated from the actions of civil society. In the conclusion to the report of the joint commission, the Olive Tree Coalition's criticism of the demonstrators was aimed not just at those who had committed acts of violence, but also at those who had proposed civil disobedience: 'Some groups of demonstrators neither isolated nor condemned the violence, and used aggressive language. They did not clearly set out the distinction between civil disobedience and violence, and behaved ambiguously, for instance demonstrating the means of penetrating the red zone in front of television cameras' (p. 96). The prevalence of these images explains the unwillingness of the centre left government to meet with the GSF (a fact self-critically confessed by Folena, one of the DS leadership group), the search for a bipartisan agreement on the G8, the delayed and painful declaration of support by the DS for the demonstration to be held on 21 July and its immediate withdrawal of that support on 20 July after the death of the demonstrator. The discussion within the DS over inviting the GSF spokesman Agnoletto as a (non-speaking) guest to the party congress underlines the difficulties that possible openings to the movement come up against in the 'institutional left' (see, for example, the document *Un altro mondo è possibile* passed by the Congress on 18 November 2001).

Simultaneously, these positions reduce the 'no global' movement's trust in the opposition parties, with the significant exception of RC: only 9 per cent of those interviewed in Genoa indicated the DS as a party they considered to be close, as against 58 per cent who indicated RC. This was amongst a population which placed itself 37 per cent on the extreme left, 54 per cent on the left and 7 per cent on the centre left. Despite the fact that the Olive Tree Coalition was the instigator of the joint commission, only RC gave the movement any currency. In its final report, the Black Bloc was described as 'a group external to and competing with the GSF' (Constitutional Affairs Committee, enquiry, sitting of 20 September, p. 122).

Despite finding little support in institutional politics at the moment, the 'no global' movement is nevertheless well implanted in an extensive network of associations, from Catholics to ecologists, from association volunteers to union members, from the defence of human rights to women's emancipation. As long as these associative activities distance themselves from the risk of escalations in violence, the quality of democracy will depend upon the capacity of institutional politics to interact with them, taking advantage of their notable participatory resources and perhaps finding new areas and legitimation on 'no global' issues. A repressive response, however, risks a further delegitimation of institutions, as was shown in numerous protests in the press and from overseas, together with the solidarity expressed with the demonstrators from various national and supranational associations. The shift from prevention to repression appears not only to be a losing strategy but a politically dangerous one as well.

(Translated by Jocelyn A.J. Evans)

Notes

1. The reconstruction of events that follows is based upon a review of the daily press and the minutes of a joint Chamber of Deputies and Senate commission set up to investigate 'the events of Genoa on 19, 20, 21 and 22 July during the G8 summit'. Beyond the Chamber press review (www.camera.it), other sources used include *La Repubblica*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *La Stampa*, *Il Giornale*, *L'Unità*, *Il Manifesto* and *Liberazione*. Due to lack of space, we have not cited information according to each individual text. For this information, see M. Andretta, D. della Porta, L. Mosca and H. Reiter, *Global, no-global, new global: la protesta contro il G8 a Genova*, Bari-Rome: Laterza, 2002.
2. Joint Parliamentary Commission (Chamber and Senate), minutes of 28 August 2001, p. 66.
3. See D. della Porta, H. Kriesi and D. Rucht (eds.), *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*, London, Macmillan, 1999; R. O'Brian, A.M. Goetz, J.A. Scholte and M. Williams, *Contesting Global Governance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
4. The research was carried out as part of GRACE, the Research Group on Collective Action in Europe, directed by Donatella della Porta in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at the University of Florence. The interviews were carried out by Massimiliano Andretta and Lorenzo Mosca. Some

- initial findings can be found in M. Andretta and L. Mosca, 'Il movimento 'noglobol': chi sono i protagonisti delle giornate di Genova', in *Il Mulino* 50, no. 397, 2001, pp. 903-907; and in D. della Porta and H. Reiter, 'Protesta no global e ordine pubblico', in *Il Mulino* 50, no. 397, 2001, pp. 871-882.
5. 'Diario', *Speciale Genova*, supplement to no. 31, 2001, p. 50. The existence of an agreement between the police and the peaceful protesters on the shape of disobedience can also be inferred from the deposition of the Genovese Chief Constable Colucci before the Joint Parliamentary Commission.
 6. For a review of research into social movements, see D. della Porta and M. Diani, *I movimenti sociali*, Rome, Carocci, 1997.
 7. On the role of security services during the 1970s escalation, see D. della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995.
 8. See, for instance, P.A.J. Waddington, *Liberty and Order: Policing Public Order in a Capital City*, London, UCL Press, 1994, which analyses public order management in London.
 9. That this movement is more composite than its predecessors is confirmed by the interviews with the Genoa demonstrators: 85 per cent of those interviewed do recognise a single movement in all its complexity, and 75 per cent see this movement as made up of an ensemble of organisations with certain common goals.
 10. For a more extensive analysis, see della Porta and Reiter, 'Protesta no global e ordine pubblico'.
 11. On 'negotiated' strategies, de-escalation and prevention, see D. della Porta and H. Reiter (eds.), *Protest Policing*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
 12. Since Genoa, these practices have been subjected to increasing criticism in Germany. See *Die Zeit*, no. 37, 2001, p. 4ff; O. Griebenow and H. Busch, 'Nach Göteborg und Genua. Weder Reisefreiheit noch Demonstrationsrecht in der EU?' in *Bürgerrechte und Polizei/CILIP* 69, no. 2, 2001, pp. 63-69.
 13. See the report of Violante, Boato, Sinisi, Bressa, Labate, Soda, Zanotti presented in the sitting of 20 September of the Joint Parliamentary Commission, p. 61.
 14. Report of Deputy Mascia, in *ibid.* pp. 160-161.
 15. It should be recalled that in the 1970s, union members and left-wing parties asked the police not to turn up to political demonstrations (D. della Porta and H. Reiter, *Polizia e protesta. L'ordine pubblico dalla Liberazione ai 'no global'*, Rome-Bari, Mulino, forthcoming).
 16. See della Porta and Reiter, 'Protesta no global e ordine pubblico'.